



JB Pritzker, Governor
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IL Department on Aging; Elder Abuse Awareness Turns Chicago Purple June 8th - 10th *Governor Pritzker proclaims June 15th Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Illinois*

Chicago, IL – June 15th is Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Illinois, and the state's Department on Aging (IDoA) is encouraging "Lifting Up Voices." That's the theme of this year's recognition, which emphasizes the importance of strengthening our communities and preventing elder abuse.

To raise awareness of this under-identified and under-reported crisis, IDoA applied and was approved to be part of the Building Owners and Managers Association of Chicago's (BOMA/Chicago) Illuminate Chicago building light program. The program coordinates the lighting of buildings along Chicago's skyline to support various causes throughout the year. Specifically, June 8th through June 10th, buildings will have the option to light their buildings purple, the main symbol for World Elder Abuse Awareness.

Governor JB Pritzker has issued a proclamation, encouraging all of us to educate ourselves on elder abuse; how we can recognize the signs, provide intervention and stop this abuse from happening.

"Preventing abuse and neglect of older Illinoisans takes a coordinated effort and requires everyone to do their part," said Gov. JB Pritzker. "Please call our statewide hotline at 866-800-1409 if you witness or are a victim of abuse. Our entire state government is here to give victims of abuse the support and tools they need."

In 2018, Adult Protective Services at IDoA responded to more than 17,000 reports of suspected abuse, neglect and financial exploitation of adults with disabilities and adults 60 years of age and older. Financial exploitation represents 50 percent of elder abuse cases, and victims generally experience more than one type of abuse, i.e., financial abuse is highly associated with emotional abuse at 38 percent.

"This is the very least we can do. No one likes to talk about it, but it happens every day with alarming frequency," said Paula Basta, Director of IDoA. "We all have the right to be treated with dignity and respect - to feel safe and secure. We want people to know there's help available. If you are a victim, know or suspect someone who is being victimized, pick up the phone to get them some help. No one should have to go it alone."

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The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966; 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)

If you are a victim of abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation - or suspect that someone you know is a victim - call our **statewide 24-hour Abuse Hotline at 866-800-1409**. Trained professionals are on call and prepared to take reports of elder abuse and forward them promptly to local senior protective service agencies or law enforcement. All calls and information related to elder abuse are strictly confidential. The sooner we know about the abuse, the sooner we can put a stop to it.

The text of the Governor's proclamation is below:

WHEREAS, protecting adults and those with disabilities is an important undertaking conducted admirably by the Illinois Department on Aging, its Office of Adult Protective Services, and providers throughout the state; and,

WHEREAS, in 2018 the Department responded to more than 17,000 reports of abuse of adults age 60 and older, and persons ages 18-59 with a disability, though the crisis remains vastly under-identified and under-reported; and,

WHEREAS, abuse may take many forms, including financial exploitation, emotional abuse, passive neglect, physical abuse, willful deprivation, confinement, and sexual abuse, and these often occur in tandem; and,

WHEREAS, victims are often abused by family members or other relatives; and,

WHEREAS, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of any individual is an affront to human rights in Illinois and around the world; and,

WHEREAS, the Adult Protective Services Act is a law created in Illinois to help this vulnerable population by stopping abuse and putting in protective barriers and services in place to achieve safety; and,

WHEREAS, it is important for all Americans and all Illinoisans to learn to recognize and report any signs of mistreatment, and redouble our efforts to build communities that safeguard our elders and persons with disabilities; and,

WHEREAS, suspected abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of an eligible adult should be reported to the statewide 24-hour Abuse Hotline at 866-800-1409; and,

WHEREAS, abuse of adults is a worldwide problem. Elder Abuse Awareness Day began 13 years ago at the United Nations by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization;

THEREFORE, I, JB Pritzker, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim June 15, 2019 as **ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY** in Illinois.

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